

MAKIDA, H. et al.
Serial No. 10/730,380
Response to Office Action dated May 19, 2006

Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject patent application are respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that claims 2-4, 6-8 and 10-12 contain allowable subject matter and that claims 14, 15, 17 and 18 are allowed.

Claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 10 and 11 have been written in self-standing independent form and are believed to be allowable. Claims 1, 5 and 9 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 4 depends from claim 2; claim 8 depends from claim 6; and claim 12 depends from claim 10. Consequently, claims 4, 8 and 12 are also believed to be allowable.

Claim 13 has been amended to incorporate subject matter corresponding to that in allowable claim 2 and thus claim 13 and its dependent claim 16 are believed to be allowable.

New claims 19-23 have been added. Claims 19 depends from claim 3; claim 20 depends from claim 7; and claim 21 depends from claim 11. Because these claims depend from allowable claims, claims 19-21 are themselves believed to be allowable.

New claim 22 incorporates subject matter corresponding to that in allowable claim 3 and thus claim 22 and its dependent claim 23 are believed to be allowable.

While not acquiescing in the rejection of claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 16 based on Bernstein et al. (EP 0406602), the above-described amendments are believed to render this rejection moot.

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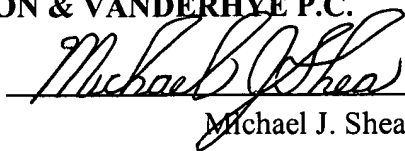
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The pending claims are believed to be allowable and favorable office action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHVE P.C.

By:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael J. Shea", is written over a horizontal line.

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